

NAID 969012  
By 371VSW Date 4/29/98



Aid (us) Bangladesh  
Department of State  
**TELEGRAM**

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 /026 W

050410

R 191200Z DEC 72  
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8281

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 DACCA 5451

EXDIS

SUBJ: INITIAL FY 73 GRANT TO BANGLADESH

REF: DACCA 5120

SUMMARY: EMBASSY SEES POSSIBILITY TO FOCUS ON SIGNING FIRST FY 73 AID AGREEMENT AS OCCASION TO HAVE AWAMI LEAGUE CABINET MAKE SYMBOLIC GESTURE TO INDICATE IT DOES NOT INTEND TO DISAVOW RESPONSIBILITY FOR BDG'S ACCEPTANCE OF US AID. ACTION REQUESTED: INSTRUCTIONS FOR DISCUSSING ARRANGEMENTS WITH BDG FOR CONCLUDING AGREEMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. CONSIDERATIONS OF TIMELY AND ORDERLY OPERATIONS OF AID/W AND USCOR ARGUE STRONGLY FOR PROMPT SIGNATURE OF INITIAL AGREEMENT WITH BDG IN AMOUNT RECOMMENDED REFTEL. EMBASSY IS IN ACCORD WITH THOSE CONSIDERATIONS AND WISHES TO AVERT PROGRAM DISRUPTIONS AND MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS THAT WOULD ENSUE FROM PROTRACTED DELAY IN SIGNING AGREEMENT.

2. WE WOULD FORESEE NO DIFFICULTY FROM BDG SIDE IF MUJIB GOVERNMENT WERE WILLING TO REMOVE US AID AS AN ISSUE FROM AWAMI LEAGUE ELECTION CAMPAIGN ORATORY. MANNER OF ACHIEVING THIS OBJECTIVE REQUIRES KEEN JUDGEMENT ON HOW BEST TO INSURE LONG-TERM POSTURE WHICH EMBASSY AND USIS ARE CONVINCED IT IS NECESSARY TO ASSUME AT THIS TIME FOR SAKE OF PRESENT AND FUTURE AID RELATIONSHIP WITH BDG.

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PA/HO, Department of State  
E.O. 12958, as amended  
June 9, 2005

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3. CHARGE D'AFFAIRES CITES UNFORTUNATE WEAKNESS OF SENIOR AWAMI LEAGUE POLITICIANS (NOTABLY FINANCE MINISTER TAJUDDIN) FOR DISPLAYING IN PUBLIC ORATORY THAT THEY ARE MORE "ANTI-IMPERIALIST" THAN THEIR MARXIST RIVALS. SUCH ORATORY HAS TENDED TO GIVE CURRENCY TO MYTH THAT US ASSISTANCE TO BANGLADESH HAS SOMEHOW BEEN INSITUATED BEHIND BACKS OF BD PATRIOTS. UNCONSCIOUS ASSUMPTIONS TAKE ROOT THAT THERE IS SOMETHING SHAMEFUL ABOUT ACCEPTING US AID AND SOMETHING SINISTER ABOUT OUR MOTIVES IN GIVING IT. TEMPTATION OF AWAMI LEAGUERS TO PLAY THIS THEME - IMPLICITLY OR EXPLICITLY - LIKELY TO GROW DURING ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN NOW BEGUN. SUCH PSYCHOLOGICAL BACKDROP COULD HAVE - AND MAY ALREADY HAVE HAD - INTIMIDATING EFFECT ON BDG WORKING LEVEL CIVIL SERVANTS.

4. EMBASSY IS CONVINCED WE CANNOT LOOK FORWARD TO HEALTHY OR EFFECTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIP IN IMPLEMENTATION OUR AID PROJECTS UNLESS WE AND BDG LEADERS DISPEL NOTION THAT US AID PROGRAMS ARE FOISTED ON BD CIVIL SERVANTS WITHOUT CONFORMANCE OF AWAMI LEAGUE POLITICAL LEADERS WITHIN BDG.

5. CHARGE BELIEVES THAT WE HAVE OPPORTUNITY NOW TO INCORPORATE IMPORTANT POINT IN SCENARIO FOR SIGNING FY 73 AGREEMENT. HE THEREFORE REQUESTS WASHINGTON GUIDANCE WHICH WOULD PERMIT HIM EITHER (A) TO INSIST POLITELY BUT FIRMLY THAT NEW AGREEMENT BE SIGNED IN PUBLIC CEREMONY PRESIDED OVER BY RELEVANT BDG CABINET MINISTER (PREFERABLY FINANCE OR FOREIGN AFFAIRS) OR (B) TO INDUCE BDG TAKE SOME OTHER STEP AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL WHICH WOULD MAKE CLEAR TO PUBLIC THAT AWAMI LEAGUE GOVERNMENT NOT A PARTY TO HOSTILE ANTI-US AID ORATORY OR (C) DELAY SIGNING UNTIL AFTER MARCH 7 ELECTIONS.

6. EMBASSY CONCEPTION SCENARIO "A" DOES NOT ENVISAGE CABINET MINISTER'S ACTUALLY SIGNING AGREEMENT. IT SEEMS THAT BDG HAS FALLEN IN WITH HOARY TRADITION DATING FROM BRITISH RAJ CALLING FOR SENIOR CIVIL SERVANT, SUCH AS FINANCE SECRETARY,

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TO PERFORM SIGNATURE).

7. CABINET MINISTER'S PRESENCE AT SIGNING CEREMONY (AND EMBASSY-BDG DISCUSSIONS LEADING UP TO SUCH ARRANGEMENT) COULD DRIVE HOME POINT THAT WE DO NOT EXPECT AWAMI LEAGUE TO DISAVOW RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACCEPTANCE US AID OR TO IMPUTE CLANDESTINE MOTIVES ON OUR PART.

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By ST/VSW Date 4/27/98



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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8282

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EXDIS

8. EMBASSY, IN LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITY TO ESTABLISH THIS ELEMENT IN OUR STANCE IN DACCA, IS NOT THERERY INCLINED TO DEPART FROM "LOW PROFILE" WHICH HAS CHARACTERIZED OUR ACTIVITIES HERE SINCE BD INDEPENDENCE.

9. OBVIOUSLY WE DO NOT WANT TO - INDEED WE MUST NOT - GIVE OCCASION FOR INFERENCE THAT USG ATTEMPTING TO ATTENUATE DOCTRINAIRE "SOCIALIST" ORIENTATION OF BD REGIME NOW FORMALLY ENSHRINED IN BD CONSTITUTION.

10. THERE COULD BE IDEOLOGICAL BOOBY TRAP FOR US IN REACHING FOR OUR OBJECTIVE SYMROLICALLY IN SIGNATURE CEREMONY. IF BD LEADERS FIND SIGNATURE CEREMONY UNPALATABLE, BDG MIGHT COME UP WITH ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE.

11. FOR ALL WE KNOW BDG MAY OFFER NO HESITATION IN PROVIDING RELEVANT CABINET MINISTER TO PRESIDE OVER SIGNING UNDER EYES OF TELEVISION AND PRESS CAMERAS. FOREIGN MINISTER'S REPEATED PROTESTATIONS THAT HE IS SEEKING WAYS TO DEEPEN AND STRENGTHEN BD-US RELATIONS WOULD SUGGEST READY ACCEPTANCE.

12. ON OTHER HAND, IF DEPARTMENT CONSIDERS THAT IT WOULD BE POLITICALLY TOO RISKY AT THIS MOMENT TO TAKE INITIATIVE IN ASKING BDG TO STAGE SUCH

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CEREMONY OR PROVIDE BENGAL-DEvised ALTERNATIVE, WE SHOULD BE READY TO SIT TIGHT AND WAIT FOR BDG OVERTURE. WE THEN WOULD RESPOND THAT USG WILLING TO WAIT UNTIL AFTER BD ELECTIONS SINCE US ASSISTANCE SO PATENTLY A DIFFICULT SUBJECT FOR AWAMI LEAGUE CANDIDATES TO HANDLE. NATURALLY WE SHOULD HAVE TO WEIGH QUESTION AS TO WHETHER USG INACTIVITY MIGHT BE CONSTRUED AS PRESSURE TO INFLUENCE ELECTIONS.

13. WE SHOULD BE SORRY FOR MANY REASONS - NOT LEAST OF WHICH ARE LOSS OF OPERATIONAL LEAD TIME IN AID/W - IF WE ARE CONSTRAINED TO WAIT UNTIL AFTER MARCH ELECTIONS TO SIGN ALTERNATIVE, HOWEVER, IS TO PROCEED WITH SIGNATURE AS THOUGH BDG CIVIL SERVICE IS MERELY INITIALLING ADD-ON TO PRIOR AID AGREEMENTS STILL DIMLY UNDERSTOOD BY BD PUBLIC AND AWAMI LEAGUE. FOR US TO SIGN AGREEMENT IN MIDST OF POLITICAL CAMPAIGN WHILE AWAMI LEAGUE LEADERS ARE EXCORIATING USG INVITES RIDICULE. FURTHERMORE, WE OUGHT NOT TO ENCOURAGE STATE OF MIND AMONG THOSE BENGALIS WHO WOULD LIKE TO THINK THAT THEY ARE ENTITLED TO UNLIMITED AID FROM USG OF INDEFINITE DURATION BY WAY OF EXPIATING PAST US SUPPORT OF PAKISTANI OPPRESSORS.

14. TO PROCEED AS IN PARA 13 ALTERNATIVE INVITES FUTURE MISCONSTRUCTION AND MISUNDERSTANDING - BOTH IN BD AND WITH US CONGRESS AND PUBLIC - IN YEARS AHEAD DURING WHICH BDG SO CLEARLY AND PAINFULLY WILL NEED OUR HELP.

15. ACTION REQUESTED: INSTRUCTIONS (1) TO APPROACH BDG FOR ARRANGEMENTS SIGNATURE FIRST FY 73 AGREEMENT IN EARLY JANUARY ON BASIS SCENARIO "A" OR "B" OR (2) GUIDANCE TO USE WITH BDG IF DEPARTMENT AND AID/W PREFER TO DELAY SIGNATURE UNTIL AFTER MARCH ELECTIONS. GDS NEWBERRY

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